

REMARKS

Claims 1–10 were pending and were rejected. No claims are amended. New claims 11–20 are presented. Reconsideration is requested in view of the following remarks.

Objections to the Specification

Examiner objected to the Abstract. A new abstract is submitted that should overcome this objection. Withdrawal of the objection is therefore requested.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1–6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by ITU-T Recommendation H.261 (“H.261”). Claims 7–10 were rejected as obvious over a combination of H.261 and U.S. Patent 5,305,097 to Sato et al. (“Sato”), which teaches a videophone implementing the H.261 recommendation. For the reasons set forth below, the rejections of the pending claims in view of H.261 is improper. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are therefore requested.

The pending claims are drawn to methods and systems for implementing video encoding or decoding with an Intra refresh mechanism. Each of the claims recites that one or more macroblocks of a given frame to be Intra refreshed belong to a first slice group with remaining macroblocks being assigned to one or more additional slice groups. For each picture in a sequence, different macroblocks can be assigned to the first slice group, which, over a sequence of frames, can allow each macroblock to be intra refreshed. Each of the claims also recites an macroblock map, which is transmitted to allow a decoder to figure out which macroblocks belong to the first slice group (and thus are Intra coded) and which macroblocks belong to the one or more additional slice groups.

Examiner has proposed H.261 as meeting the limitations of the pending claims. However, H.261 cannot meet these limitations. For example, claim 1 recites “assigning ... one or more ... macroblocks to be Intra refreshed to a first slice group,” and “assigning ... a remainder of the ... macroblocks to one or more other slice groups.” Examiner cites the GOBs of H.261 as meeting this limitation. However, Examiner also correctly states that “[t]he location of each GOB is defined in an image, and so the location of a particular macroblock determines its assignment to the proper GOB.” These two items are fundamentally inconsistent. If the

association between a particular macroblock and a particular GOB is defined *a priori* by the standard, then it is impossible to “assign” one or more macroblocks to one slice group and the remaining macroblocks to one or more other slice groups. Furthermore, it is impossible to use slice group assignments in an Intra refresh mechanism as described. Therefore, the H.261 standard cannot meet the “assigning” limitations of claim 1 or the similar limitations of the various other independent claims.

Similarly, H.261 cannot meet the macroblock map limitations of the pending claims. For example, claim 1 recites “generation a map indicating what macroblocks were assigned to the first slice group.” Other independent limitations recite similar limitations. Examiner proposes the group number as meeting the slice group map. Again, however, this number can only serve as a “map” in the case where the correspondence between macroblocks and groups is known in advance, which is fundamentally inconsistent with the claimed Intra refresh mechanism. Furthermore, claim 1 also recites “indexing the map for each subsequent frame to correspond to the macroblocks to be Intra refreshed in the subsequent frame.” As Examiner has noted, there is a fixed relationship between a macroblock and a given GOP in H.261. Thus, the “map” cited by Examiner, *i.e.*, the Group Number, cannot be indexed to correspond to the macroblocks to be Intra refreshed in the subsequent frame. The group number of a given macroblock will be the same from one frame to the next. As with the “assigning” limitations discussed above, similar limitations relating to the macroblock map appear in each of the independent claims.

New claims 11–20 are presented, which are even more clearly distinguished from the cited art. For example, claim 11 recites “assigning *a small subset* of the plurality of macroblocks to be Intra refreshed in the first picture to a first slice group.” The H.261 standard clearly teaches fixed relationships between blocks and GOPs, which are basically evenly distributed. There is no GOP that has only a small subset of the plurality of macroblocks of a given picture. Similarly, claim 12 recites “transmitting the encoded macroblocks of the at least one subsequent picture and an index corresponding to a macroblock map of the first picture, such that the macroblock map of the first picture need not be transmitted again,” which is also neither taught nor suggested by the H.261 standard. Furthermore, the dependent claims requiring that the blocks be encoded/decoded according to the H.264 standard cannot be met by the H.261 standard. These examples are merely exemplary, and there are other distinctions between the new claims and the cited art.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that the present application is now in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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